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BULLETIN  
OF THE AMERICAN ART-UNION.

NEW-YORK, OCTOBER 1, 1851.

[We owe an apology to our readers and correspondents for several typographical errors which disfigured our last number, and particularly for the spelling of certain foreign words. Absence from the city prevented us from bestowing as much attention on the proof as usual.]

## THE ILLUSTRATIONS.

Our principal illustration this month is the third etching in outline, by DARLEY, a scene in *The Prairie*, which derives a melancholy interest from the recent death of the distinguished author of that novel. It represents the treachery of Mahtoree, the crafty Teton chief, who having met Hard-Heart, the chief of the Pawnees, with professions of friendship, suddenly discharges at his unprotected breast an arrow, which the other by great dexterity causes his horse to receive instead of himself. The place of meeting is a low island of sand, in the midst of a wide river. Each warrior had thrown away his fusce, and was armed with spear, bow, quiver, battle-axe, knife, and shield of hides. In answer to an attempt on the part of the Teton to persuade the Pawnee to unite with him in attacking the whites, Hard-Heart says:

"Teton, no! Hard-Heart has never struck the stranger. They come into his lodge and eat, and they go out in safety. A mighty chief is their friend! When my people call the young men to go on the war-path, the moccasin of Hard-Heart is the last. But his village is no sooner hid by the trees than it is the first. No, Teton; his arm will never be lifted against the stranger."

"Fool; die, with empty hands!" Mahtoree exclaimed, setting an arrow to his bow, and sending it, with a sudden and deadly aim, full at the naked bosom of his generous and confiding enemy.

The action of the treacherous Teton was too quick and too well matured to admit of any of the ordinary means of defence on the part of the Pawnee. His shield was hanging at his shoulder, and even the arrow had been suffered to fall from its place, and lay in the hollow of the hand which grasped his bow. But the quick eye of the brave had time to see the movement, and his ready thoughts did not desert him. Pulling hard and with a jerk upon the rein, his steed reared his forward legs into the air, and, as the rider bent his body low, the horse served for a shield against the danger. So true, however, was the aim, and so powerful the force by which it was sent, that the arrow entered the neck of the animal and broke the skin on the opposite side.

We will remind our readers, who may have forgotten the story, that Hard-Heart was finally successful in the conflict.

The wood cuts were drawn on the block,

by Mr. LOUIS LANG, to illustrate the interesting sketch of Artist life in Rome, for which we are indebted to his pen. They were engraved by MESSRS. BOBBETT & EDMONDS.

The engraving is a specimen print of the *Home Book of the Picturesque*, which is about being published by Mr. George P. Putnam, of this city, and which will contain thirteen engravings on steel, after landscapes painted by the most distinguished American artists. The letter press is contributed by popular writers, and the whole work, in point of literary and artistic merit, will be one of the most interesting productions of the season.

## PRE-RAPHAELITISM.\*

Mr. Ruskin has lately appeared in the *Times* newspaper as the warm advocate and apologist of that class of young artists who have assumed the name of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. The critics on the other side have accused him of inconsistency in thus defending a school which they say seems to sin against many of the very rules of art which he had previously laid down so dogmatically in the "Modern Painters." They say that these young men differ as widely from Turner, the object of the "Oxford Graduate's" admiration, in their mode of representing natural appearances, as one artist can well differ from another. Mr. Ruskin has lately published a pamphlet, the design of which is evidently to answer this accusation, and to reconcile the letters in the *Times* with the doctrines of his previous publications.

A correspondent in the August number of the Bulletin has already discussed this question with ability, and pointed out passages in the "Modern Painters" which seem to justify Mr. Ruskin's approbation of Millais and his friends. We now return to this subject rather for the sake of giving to our readers an account of the new pamphlet, which will not probably be republished here, than to make any extended observations of our own on the point of controversy.

Notwithstanding the extravagance of some of the ideas contained in this last production of Mr. Ruskin, and the tinge of egotism in the preface, where the author seems to set himself up as the great teacher of the English artists and the only honest champion of truth, it contains some valuable thoughts respecting the aim which artists should propose to themselves, and the studies by which they should be formed. As usual, Mr. Turner's works afford the chief illustration of the writer's opinions, and nearly half the space is taken up in a sketch of the development of his style and its changes at different periods. But little is said directly respecting that body of artists from whose fanciful designation the title of the pamphlet was taken. The main idea is to show that they are working on the same principles by following which Turner has become so famous, and that Pre-Raphaelitism, Raphaelitism, and Turnerism, are identical.

Mr. Ruskin introduces his remarks by some general observations upon the intention of God that every man shall be happy in his work, and for this he says three things are needed: he must be fit for it, he must not do too much of it, and he must have a sense of success in it.

\* Pre-Raphaelitism, by the author of "Modern Painters." London: Smith, Elder & Co., 65 Cornhill. 1851. pp. 65.

There is force in the following observations in regard to the mischief of over-work:

I have only a word or two to say about one special cause of over-work—the ambitious desire of doing great or clever things, and the hope of accomplishing them by immense efforts: hope as vain as it is pernicious; not only making men over-work themselves, but rendering all the work they do unwholesome to them. I say it is a vain hope, and let the reader be assured of this (it is a truth all-important to the best interests of humanity). *No great intellectual thing was ever done by great effort*; a great thing can only be done by a great man, and he does it *without effort*. Nothing is, at present, less understood by us than this—nothing is more necessary to be understood. Let me try to say it as clearly, and explain it as fully as I may.

I have said no great *intellectual* thing: for I do not mean the assertion to extend to things moral. On the contrary, it seems to me that just because we are intended, as long as we live, to be in a state of moral effort, we are *not* intended to be in intense physical or intellectual effort. Our full energies are to be given to the soul's work—to the great fight with the Dragon—the taking the kingdom of heaven by force. But the body's work and head's work are to be done quietly, and comparatively without effort. Neither limbs or brain are ever to be strained to the utmost; that is not the way in which the greatest quantity of work is to be got out of them; they are never to be worked furiously, but with tranquillity and constancy. We are to follow the plough from sunrise to sunset, but not to pull in race-boats at the twilight; we shall get no fruit of that kind of work, only disease of the heart.

How many pangs would be spared to thousands, if this great truth and law were but once sincerely, humbly understood,—that if a great thing can be done at all, it can be done easily; that, when it is needed to be done, there is perhaps only one man in the world who can do it; but *he* can do it without any trouble—without more trouble, that is, than it costs small people to do small things; nay, perhaps, with less. And yet what truth lies more openly on the surface of all human phenomena? Is not the evidence of Ease on the very front of all the greatest works in existence? Do they not say plainly to us, not "there has been a great effort here," but, "there has been a great power here?" It is not the weariness of mortality, but the strength of divinity, which we have to recognize in all mighty things; and that is just what we now never recognize, but think that we are to do great things, by help of iron bars and perspiration. Alas! we shall do nothing that way but lose some pounds of our own weight.

Yet let me not be misunderstood, nor this great truth be supposed anywise resolvable into the favorite dogma of young men, that they need not work if they have genius. The fact is that a man of genius is always far more ready to work than other people, and gets so much more good from the work that he does, and is often so little conscious of the inherent divinity in himself, that he is very apt to ascribe all his capacity to his work, and to tell those who ask how he came to be what he is: "If I am any thing, which I much doubt, I made myself so merely by labor." This was Newton's way of talking, and I suppose it would be the general tone of men whose genius had been devoted to the physical sciences. Genius in the Arts must commonly be more self-conscious, but, in whatever field, it will always be distinguished by its perpetual, steady, well-directed, happy, and faithful labor in accumulating and disciplining its powers, as well by its gigantic, incomparable facility in exercising them. Therefore, literally, it is no man's business whether he has genius or not: work he must, whatever he is, but quietly and steadily; and the natural and unforced results of such work will be always the things that God meant him to do, and will be his best. No agonies nor heart-rendings will

enable him to do any better. If he be a great man, they will be great things; if a small man, small things; but always, if thus peacefully done, good and right; always, if restlessly and ambitiously done, false, hollow, and despicable.

He now applies these observations to the Arts. "In general," he says, "the men who are employed in the Arts have freely chosen their profession, and suppose themselves to have special faculty for it; yet, as a body, they are not happy men. For which this seems to me the reason—that they are expected, and themselves expect, to make their bread *by being clever*, not by steady or quiet work; and are therefore, for the most part, trying to be clever, and so living in an utterly false state of mind and action. This is the case to the same extent in no other profession or employment." The author cites the cases of the lawyer and clergyman, from whom "healthy measurable labor" is that which is chiefly expected. "Not so," he says. "with the unhappy artist. No one expects any honest or useful work of him; but every one expects him to be ingenious. Originality, dexterity, invention, imagination, every thing is asked of him except what alone is to be had for asking—honest and sound work, and the due discharge of his function as a painter." This function is "to convey knowledge to his fellowmen of such things as cannot be taught otherwise than ocularly. For a long time this function remained a religious one: it was to impress upon the popular mind the reality of objects of faith, and the truth of the histories of Scripture, by giving visible form to both. That function has now passed away, and none has yet taken its place." (Is this so? May not painting exhibit these truths as well now as at any former time?) "The painter has no profession, no purpose. He is an idler on the earth, chasing the shadows of his own fancies."

But this, the author says, the painter was never meant to be. "The sudden naturalism or inclination to copy ordinary natural objects, which manifested itself among the painters of Europe at the moment when the invention of painting superseded their legendary labors, was no false instinct." \* \* \* \* "That instinct was urging every painter in Europe at the same moment to his true duty—the faithful representation of all objects of historical interest, or of natural beauty extant at the period." Mr. Ruskin hereupon comments upon the advantages that have resulted and would now result from the prosecution of this kind of labor—the painting with absolute faithfulness every edifice, city, battle-field and scene of the slightest historical interest—precisely and completely rendering their aspect at the time, and also with like fidelity portraying the plants and animals, natural scenery and atmospheric phenomena of every country on the earth.

So far, he says, from such training as this excluding imagination and invention, it will assist in developing these qualities. "Wherever imagination and sentiment are, they will either show themselves without forcing, or, if capable of artificial development, the kind of training which such a school of art would give them, would be the best they could receive."

If by all this Mr. Ruskin only means to say that genius is a natural gift and not to be acquired by the hardest study, that great pictures

are not to be produced by formulas and extraordinary labor, that constant observation of nature, and faithful, patient copying of her appearances, disciplines the eye and the hand, he says nothing very new or striking, however important may be the truths contained in the remarks. But if he would have the public support any large body of men who should all their lives do nothing but "draw, with unerring precision," the edifices, cities, plants, animals, &c., that he speaks of, giving them the emoluments and honors of artists, we think his advice is most unreasonable. We do expect artists to be clever. They are worth nothing if they are not clever. Of all things in the world a picture which contains nothing but "honesty and sound work," is most useless. Our author compares the painter to a poet. It is a very good comparison. But let us ask, what is a merely "honest, sound" poem good for—a poem in which natural facts are set forth as exactly and carefully as in a paper for a scientific society? Nothing at all. It must have some imagination, some invention, some fancy, in it to be worth a straw. Heaven deliver us from "tolerable" poetry as well as tolerable painting. The function of the artist is to incorporate somewhat of his own soul into the natural appearances that he imitates. If he cannot do this, he had better give up the profession and adopt map-making or sign-painting.

Mr. Ruskin sets forth the faults of the present system of artistic education as follows:

The infinite absurdity and failure of our present training consists mainly in this, that we do not rank imagination and invention high enough, and suppose they *can* be taught. Throughout every sentence that I have ever written, the reader will find the same rank attributed to these powers—the rank of a purely divine gift, not to be attained, increased, or in anywise modified by teaching, only in various ways capable of being concealed or quenched. Understand this thoroughly; know once for all, that a poet on canvass is exactly the same species of creature as a poet in song, and nearly every error in our methods of teaching will be done away with. For who among us now thinks of bringing men up to be poets?—of producing poets by any kind of general recipe or method of cultivation? Suppose even that we see in a youth that which we hope may, in its development, become a power of this kind, should we instantly, supposing that we wanted to make a poet of him, and nothing else, forbid him all quiet, steady, rational labor? Should we force him to perpetual spinning of new crudities out of his boyish brain, and set before him, as the only objects of his study, the laws of versification which criticism has supposed itself to discover in the works of previous writers? Whatever gifts the boy had, would much be likely to come of them so treated? unless, indeed, they were so great as to break through all such snares of falsehood and vanity, and build their own foundation in spite of us; whereas if, as in cases numbering millions against units, the natural gifts were too weak to do this, could any thing come of such training but utter inanity and spuriousness of the whole man? But if we had sense, should we not rather restrain and bridle the first flame of invention in early youth, heaping material on it as one would on the first sparks and tongues of a fire which we desired to feed into greatness? Should we not educate the whole intellect into general strength, and all the affections into warmth and honesty, and look to Heaven for the rest? This, I say, we should have sense enough to do, in order to produce a poet in words: but, it being required to produce a poet on canvass, what is our way of setting to work? We begin, in all probability,

by telling the youth of fifteen or sixteen, that Nature is full of faults, and that he is to improve her; but that Raphael is perfection, and that the more he copies Raphael the better; that after much copying of Raphael, he is to try what he can do himself in a Raphaelesque, but yet original manner; that is to say, he is to try to do something very clever, all out of his own head, but yet this clever something is to be properly subjected to Raphaelesque rules, is to have a principal light occupying one-seventh of its space, and a principal shadow occupying one third of the same; that no two people's heads in the picture are to be turned the same way, and that all the personages represented are to possess ideal beauty of the highest order, which ideal beauty consists partly in a Greek outline of nose, partly in proportions expressible in decimal fractions between the lips and chin; but partly also in that degree of improvement which the youth of sixteen is to bestow upon God's work in general. This, I say, is the kind of teaching which, through various channels, Royal Academy lecturings, press criticisms, public enthusiasm, and not least by solid weight of gold, we give to our young men. And we wonder we have no painters!"

Our author now instances the young men who style themselves the Pre-Raphaelites as having rebelled against this false method of study, and laments the attacks to which they have been subjected. He thinks the Academicians should have defended them, at least by contradicting false statements, and directing the attention of the public to such real merit as they possess.

To prevent all misunderstanding, he then says, that he adduces these young men only as examples of the kind of study which he desires to see substituted for that of the modern schools, and of singular success in certain characters, finish of detail and brilliancy of color. "What faculties higher than imitation may be in these men," he continues, "I do not yet venture to say; but I do say, that if they exist, such faculties will manifest themselves in due time, all the more forcibly because they have received training so severe." He then compares Mr. Millais with Mr. Turner, to show that although the main principles of training may be the same, the result in any particular case will depend upon the peculiar power and perceptions of the particular mind, and that the reason why Millais and Turner differ is, not that their training has been different, but that their natural perceptions and powers are different. He afterwards instances Hunt, Prout, Lewis, Mulready, and Landseer, as artists who have done justice to their powers by rejecting false teaching and going to nature alone—the strong innate genius in each being invariably accompanied with the same humility, earnestness and industry in study. From these names he passes to his favorite Turner, respecting the progress and development of whose style he makes many most interesting statements, some of which we will extract for the reader's gratification. This essay upon Turner is very long, and occupies nearly the whole of the remainder of the pamphlet.

The following is a description of Turner's earliest style:

Towards the close of the last century, among the various drawings executed, according to the quiet manner of the time, in greyish blue, with brown foregrounds, some began to be noticed as exhibiting rather more than ordinary diligence and delicacy, signed by W. Turner.\* There was nothing, however, in them at all indicative of

genius, or even of more than ordinary talent, unless in some of the subjects a large perception of space, and excessive clearness and decision in the arrangement of masses. Gradually and cautiously the blues became mingled with delicate green, and then with gold; the browns in the foreground became first more positive, and then were slightly mingled with other local colors; while the touch, which had at first been heavy and broken, like that of the ordinary drawing masters of the time, grew more and more refined and expressive, until it lost itself in a method of execution often too delicate for the eye to follow, rendering, with a precision before unexampled both the texture and the form of every object. The style may be considered as perfectly formed about the year 1800, and it remained unchanged for twenty years.

During that year the painter had attempted, and with more or less success had rendered, every order of landscape subject, but always on the same principle, subduing the colors of nature into a harmony of which the key-notes are greyish green and brown; pure blues, and delicate golden yellows being admitted in small quantity as the lowest and highest limits of shade and light: and bright local colors in extremely small quantity in figures or other minor accessories.

Pictures executed on such a system are not, properly speaking, works in *color* at all; they are studies of light and shade, in which both the shade and the distance are rendered in the general hue which best expresses their attributes of coolness and transparency; and the lights and the foreground are executed in that which best expresses their warmth and solidity. This advantage may just as well be taken as not, in studies of light and shadow to be executed with the hand; but the use of two, three or four colors, always in the same relations and places, does not in the least constitute the work a study of color, any more than the brown engravings of the *Liber Studiorum*; nor would the idea of color be in general more present to the artist's mind when he was at work on one of these drawings, than when he was using pure brown in the mezzotint engraving. But the idea of space, warmth, and freshness, being not successfully expressible in a single tint, and perfectly expressible by the admission of three or four, he allows himself this advantage when it is possible, without in the least embarrassing himself with the actual color of the objects to be represented. A stone in the foreground might in nature have been cold grey, but it will be drawn nevertheless of a rich brown, because it is in the foreground; a hill in the distance might in nature be purple with heath, or golden with furze; but it will be drawn, nevertheless, of a cool grey, because it is in the distance.

This at least was the general theory,—carried out with great severity in many both of the drawings and pictures executed by him during the period: in others more or less modified by the cautious introduction of color, as the painter felt his liberty increasing; for the system was evidently never considered as final, or as anything more than a means of progress: the conventional, easily manageable color, was visibly adopted, only that his mind might be at perfect liberty to address itself to the acquirement of the first and most necessary knowledge in all art—that of form. But as form, in landscape, implies vast bulk and space, the use of the tints which enabled him best to express them, was actually auxiliary to the mere drawing; and, therefore, not only permissible, but even necessary, while more brilliant or varied tints were never indulged in, except when they might be introduced without the slightest danger of diverting his mind for an instant from his principal object. And, therefore, it will be generally found in the works of this period, that exactly in proportion to the importance and general toil of the composition, is the severity of the tint; and that the play of color begins to show itself first in slight and small drawings, where he felt

that he could easily secure all that he wanted in form.

Thus the "Crossing the Brook," and such other elaborate and large compositions, are actually painted in nothing but grey, brown, and blue, with a point or two of severe local color in the figures; but in the minor drawings, tender passages of complicated color occur not unfrequently in easy places: and even before the year 1800, he begins to introduce it with evident joyfulness and longing in his rude and simple studies just as a child, if it could be supposed to govern itself by a fully developed intellect, would cautiously, but with infinite pleasure, add now and then a tiny dish of fruit, or other dangerous luxury, to the simple order of its daily fare. Thus, in the foregrounds of his most severe drawings, we not unfrequently find him indulging in the luxury of a peacock; and it is impossible to express the joyfulness with which he seems to design its graceful form, and deepen with soft pencilling the bloom of its blue, after he has worked through the stern detail of his almost colorless drawing. A rainbow is another of his most frequently permitted indulgences; and we find him very early allowing the edges of his evening clouds to be touched with soft rose-color or gold; while, whenever the hues of nature in any wise fall into his system, and can be caught without a dangerous departure from it, he instantly throws his whole soul into the faithful rendering of them. Thus the usual brown tones of his foreground become warmed into sudden vigor, and are varied and enhanced with indescribable delight, when he finds himself by the shore of a moorland stream, where they truly express the stain of its golden rocks, and the darkness of its clear Cairngorm-like pools; and the usual serenity of his aerial blue is enriched into the softness and depth of the sapphire, when it can deepen the distant slumber of some Highland lake, or temper the gloomy shadows of the evening upon its hills.

The system of his color being thus simplified, he could address all the strength of his mind to the accumulation of facts of form; his choice of subject, and his methods of treatment, are therefore as various as his color is simple; and it is not a little difficult to give the reader who is unacquainted with his works, an idea either of their infinitude of aims, on the one hand, or of the kind of feeling which pervades them all, on the other. No subject was too low or too high for him: we find him one day hard at work on a cock and hen, with their family of chickens in a farm-yard, and bringing all the refinement of his execution into play to express the texture of the plumage; next day he is drawing the Dragon of Colchis. One hour he is much interested in a gust of wind blowing away an old woman's cap; the next, he is painting the fifth plague of Egypt. Every landscape painter before him had acquired distinction by confining his efforts to one class of subject. Hobbima painted oaks; Ruysdael, waterfalls and copses; Cuyper, river or meadow scenes in quiet afternoons; Salvator and Poussin, such kind of mountain scenery as people could conceive, who lived in towns in the seventeenth century. But I am well persuaded that if all the works of Turner, up to the year 1820, were divided into classes, (as he has himself divided them in the *Liber Studiorum*,) no preponderance could be assigned to one class over another. There is architecture, including a large number of formal "gentlemen's seats," I suppose drawings commissioned by the owners; then lowland pastoral scenery of every kind, including nearly all farming operations—ploughing, harrowing, hedging and ditching, felling trees, sheep-washing, and I know not what else; then all kinds of town life—court-yards of inns, starting of mail coaches, interiors of shops, house-buildings, fairs, elections, &c.; then all kinds of inner domestic life—interiors of rooms, studies of costumes, of still life, and heraldry, including multitudes of symbolical vignettes; then marine scenery of every kind, full of local incident; every kind of boat and method of fishing for particular fish, being specifically drawn,

round the whole coast of England;—pilchard fishing at St. Ives, whiting fishing at Margate, herring at Loch Fyne; and all kinds of shipping, including studies of every separate part of the vessels, and many marine battle pieces, two in particular of Trafalgar, both of high importance—one of the Victory after the battle, now in Greenwich Hospital; another of the Death of Nelson, in his own gallery; then all kinds of mountain scenery, some idealized into compositions, others of definite localities; together with classical compositions, Romes and Carthages, and such others, by the myriad, with mythological, historical, or allegorical figures—nymphs, monsters, and spectres; heroes and divinities.\*

What general feeling, it may be asked incredulously, can possibly pervade all this?—This, the greatest of all feelings—an utter forgetfulness of self. Throughout the whole period with which we are at present concerned, Turner appears as a man of sympathy absolutely infinite—a sympathy so all-embracing, that I know nothing but that of Shakspeare compared with it. A soldier's wife resting by the road side, is not beneath it; Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, watching the dead bodies of her sons, not above it. Nothing can possibly be so mean as that it will not interest his whole mind, and carry away his whole heart; nothing so great or solemn but that he can raise himself into harmony with it; and it is impossible to prophesy of him at any moment, whether, the next, he will be in laughter or in tears.

Besides this sympathy with so many scenes of various kinds of interest, the author notices another characteristic of Turner's mind, at this period—its reverence for talent in others.

Not the reverence which acts upon the practices of men as if they were the laws of nature, but that which is ready to appreciate the power, and receive the assistance, of every mind which has been previously employed in the same direction, so far as its teaching seems to be consistent with the great text-book of nature itself.

The following qualities are described as being characteristic of Turner's second manner: "A new energy inherent in the mind of the painter, diminishing the repose and exalting the force and fire of his conceptions, and the presence of Color, as at least an essential, and often a principal, element of design."

Mr. Ruskin gives as the *immediate* reason of this change, the impression made upon the artist by the charms of the continental skies, but states as another motive, his ambition to show his brother artists that he could excel them in color as well as drawing.

Several curious illustrations are given of Turner's extraordinary memory. "I am thus tedious," says the author, "in dwelling on Turner's powers of memory, because I wish it to be thoroughly seen how all his greatness, all his infinite luxuriance of invention, depends on his taking possession of everything that he sees,—on his grasping all, and losing hold of nothing,—on his forgetting himself, and forgetting nothing else. I wish it to be understood how every great man paints what he sees or did see, his greatness being indeed little else than his intense sense of fact. And thus Pre-Raphaelitism and Raphaelichkeit, and Turnerism, are all one and the same, so far as education can influence them. They are different in their choice, different in their faculties, but all the same in this, that Raphael himself, so far as he was great, and all who preceded or followed him who ever were great, became so by painting the truths around them as they appeared to each man's own mind, not as

\* He did not use his full signature, J. M. W., until about the year 1800.

\* I shall give a *catalogue raisonné* of all this in the third volume of "Modern Painters."



THE PONTE MOLLE ASSOCIATION. THE EXAMINATION.

Drawn by L. S. Long. Engraved by BOBBETT &amp; EDMONDS.

he had been taught to see them, except by the God who made both him and them."

We conclude our extracts with some remarks upon composition and the mistake of over-working, into which the author's friends, the Pre-Raphaelites, have fallen.

If a man can compose at all, he can compose at once, or rather he must compose in spite of himself. And this is the reason of that silence which I have kept, in most of my works, on the subject of Composition. Many critics, especially the architects, have found fault with me for not "teaching people how to arrange masses," for not "attributing sufficient importance to composition." Alas! I attribute far more importance to it than they do;—so much importance, that I should just as soon think of sitting down to teach a man how to write a *Divina Commedia*, or *King Lear*, as how to "compose," in the true sense, a single building or picture. The marvellous stupidity of this age of lecturers is, that they do not see that what they call "principles of composition," are mere principles of common sense in every thing, as well as in pictures and buildings;—A picture is to have a principal light? Yes; and so a dinner is to have a principal dish, and an oration a principal point, and an air of music a principal note, and every man a principal object. A picture is to have harmony of relation among its parts? Yes; and

so is a speech well uttered, and an action well ordered, and a company well chosen, and a ragoût well mixed. Composition! As if a man were not composing every moment of his life, well or ill, and would not do it instinctively in his picture as well as elsewhere, if he could. Composition of this lower or common kind is of exactly the same importance in a picture that it is in any thing else,—no more. It is well that a man should say what he has to say in good order and sequence, but the main thing is to say it truly. And yet we go on preaching to our pupils as if to have a principal light was every thing, and so cover our academy walls with Shabacab feasts, wherein the courses are indeed well ordered but the dishes empty.

It is not, however, only in invention that men over-work themselves, but in execution also; and here I have a word to say to the Pre-Raphaelites specially. They are working too hard. There is evidence in failing portions of their pictures, showing that they have wrought so long upon them that their very sight has failed for weariness, and that the hand refused any more to obey the heart. And, besides this, there are certain qualities of drawing which they miss from over-carefulness. For, let them be assured, there is a great truth lurking in that common desire of men to see things done in what they call a "masterly," or "bold," or "broad," manner: a truth oppressed and abused, like almost every other in this world, but an eternal one nevertheless; and whatever mischief may have followed from

men's looking for nothing else but this facility of execution, and supposing that a picture was assuredly all right if only it were done with broad dashes of the brush, still the truth remains the same:—that because it is not intended that men shall torment or weary themselves with any earthly labor, it is appointed that the noblest results should only be attainable by a certain ease and decision of manipulation. I only wish people understood this much of sculpture, as well as of painting, and could see that the finely finished statue is, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, a far more vulgar work than that which shows rough signs of the right hand laid to the workman's hammer: but at all events, in painting it is felt by all men, and justly felt. The freedom of the lines of nature can only be represented by a similar freedom in the hand that follows them; there are curves in the flow of the hair, and in the form of the features, and in the muscular outline of the body, which can in no wise be caught but by a sympathetic freedom in the stroke of the pencil. I do not care what example is taken, be it the most subtle and careful work of Leonardo himself, there will be found a play and power and ease in the outlines, which no slow effort could ever imitate. And if the Pre-Raphaelites do not understand how this kind of power, in its highest perfection, may be united with the most severe rendering of all other orders of truth, and especially of those with which they themselves have most sympathy, let them look at the drawings of John Lewis.